



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact: DES Public Information Office
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DES SEEKS PUBLIC'S ASSISTANCE IN LOCATING RUNAWAY YOUTHS

PHOENIX – (September 11, 2003) The Arizona Department of Economic Security, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, and the Glendale Police Department are seeking the public's assistance in locating three runaway youths.

Melissa Yvette Hernandez, age 14, Maria Molina, age 16, and Dora Molina, age 17, are sisters. Dora and Maria ran from their foster care placements in the fall of 2002. In December 2002, officials believe Maria removed Melissa from the school she was attending.

It is presumed the three girls are together and still in the Phoenix area. Officials suspect the girls may be living with relatives in the South Phoenix area, who may be hiding them from DES and the police.

Melissa Yvette Hernandez is a 14-year-old Hispanic female. She is approximately 5 feet 2 inches tall and weighs about 90 pounds. When last seen, Melissa had shoulder length brown hair and no known distinguishing marks or tattoos. Melissa was last seen on December 3, 2002.

Melissa is in need of on-going supervision and medical care; without it, Melissa may be vulnerable to danger.

Maria Molina is a 16-year-old Hispanic female. She is approximately 5 feet 2 inches tall and weighs about 120 pounds. She has dark brown eyes and medium skin tone. When last seen, Maria had shoulder length dark brown hair and no known distinguishing marks or tattoos. Maria was last seen on November 28, 2002.

Dora Molina is a 17-year-old Hispanic female. She is approximately 5 feet 3 inches tall and weighs about 110 pounds. She has dark almond-shaped eyes and medium skin tone. When last seen, Dora had long dark hair and no known distinguishing marks or tattoos. Dora was last seen on September 29, 2003.

DES and the Glendale police are asking for the public's assistance in locating Dora, Maria and Melissa. If anyone knows of the sisters' whereabouts, or has seen them, please contact the Glendale Police Department at 623-930-3000 or the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-888-767-2445. Operators at the Child Abuse Hotline are available 24 hours a day.

Pictures are available by calling the DES Public Information Office at (602) 542-4296.

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